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ROMNEY ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES \$1.1 MILLION FOR CAPE COD RAIL TRAIL RECONSTRUCTION

Funds will allow resurfacing and widening of two miles of trail, future improvements eyed

BREWSTER –Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Herzfelder and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Katherine F. Abbott today announced \$1.1 million in state funding to rebuild and widen sections of the Cape Cod Rail Trail in Brewster and Eastham.

“Like a good bike, a rail trail must be well maintained in order to be fun and safe,” said Secretary Herzfelder. “The Romney Administration is committed to maintaining and improving the tremendous recreational infrastructure that makes Massachusetts such a great place to live and raise a family.”

Herzfelder said the new project is scheduled to begin in September 2004 and includes a full reconstruction and widening of two sections of the trail: a one-mile stretch between Millstone Road and the Mitchell Land in Brewster and a shorter section between Boat Meadow River Creek and Governor Prence Road in Eastham. These improvements comprise Phase II of the Cape Cod Rail Trail Rehabilitation and Safety Improvements Project.

The \$1.1 million in funding will cover all Phase II design and reconstruction in addition to design work for the four remaining sections of trail eyed for reconstruction. In the past, trail design was done in phases on an as-needed basis. Performing all design work for the four remaining phases at one time is expected to yield cost efficiencies and advance the reconstruction schedule.

Herzfelder pointed out that a supplemental spending bill proposed by Governor Mitt Romney on June 3, 2004 included \$5 million for the Cape Cod Rail Trail. If approved by the Legislature this amount could be used to fund the reconstruction of remaining portions of the trail. The cost of remaining work is estimated at \$6.1 million (Phase II included).

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“I am delighted to be able to help celebrate the 25th anniversary of our Cape Cod Rail Trail,” said Representative Shirley Gomes of Harwich. “This trail is a wonderful asset for the Commonwealth and one of the most popular attractions on Cape Cod. It is truly a pleasure to see so many people biking and walking the trail and enjoying the beautiful sights of the Cape. We are very proud of the Cape Cod Rail Trail and will continue to work to make it even better.”

The two links slated for reconstruction are among the oldest of any on the trail and are near the end of their useful lives. Phase II will widen the two sections from eight feet to 10 feet to allow easier and safer passage for the trail’s many different users who include bikers, runners, walkers and roller-bladers.

“With nearly a half million visitors per year, the Cape Cod Rail Trail is one of the most popular attractions in the entire state parks system,” said DCR Commissioner Abbott. “Knowing how many people enjoy the trail, it is very gratifying to make another significant investment in the trail’s future and in the safety and enjoyment of all that use it.”

Abbott said a new \$40,000 short-term summer maintenance contract for the trail will repair root damage, smooth uneven pavement and trim trees and bushes along the trail to create better sightlines for trail users.

One of the first rail trails in the nation, the Cape Cod Rail Trail carves a gentle path along the spine of Cape Cod, covering 22 miles of former railroad bed in the towns of Dennis, Harwich, Brewster, Orleans, Eastham and Wellfleet.

Secretary Herzfelder and Commissioner Abbott made their announcement as trail users and conservation groups joined together to celebrate the trail’s 25th anniversary and National Trails Day. Events benefiting rail trail renovation and advocacy occurred throughout the day at Nickerson State Park and along the length of the trail as part of Rail-Trail Jam 2004.

Events were sponsored by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, which owns and operates the trail, and the National Rails to Trails Conservancy, a non-profit organization that assists communities seeking to convert disused rail lines to community bike trails. Festivities included a 5K fitness walk, a 20-mile bike ride, a bike safety rodeo and environmental education programs.

Highlighted Cape Cod Rail Trail improvements:

- Widen the trail from eight feet to 10 feet for safer navigation.
- Remove roots and install root barriers as needed.
- Retain/extend the non-paved five-foot equestrian/pedestrian surfaces where possible.
- Replace old culverts.
- Restore and reinforce eroding embankments.
- Trim trees along the trail for better sightlines.

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